

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY MINISTER ALKHIMOV ON AMERICAN-SOVIET TRADE
PROSPECTS

1. SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF PURPORTED NEW YORK INTERVIEW
PUBLISHED IZVESTIYA MARCH 4 DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER
VLADIMIR S. ALKHIMOV DISCUSSED SOVIET EXPECTATIONS FOR
BILATERAL TRADE IN CONTEXT OF RECENT US-USSR TRADE AND
ECONOMIC COUNCIL BOARD MEETING. ALKHIMOV NOTED THAT
SECRETARY KISSINGER IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH GROUP HAD
TOUCHED IN PART ON HIS GENEVA ECOUNTER WITH GROMYKO,
WHICH SECRETARY ASSESSED AS "VERY FRUITFUL." ALKHIMOV
ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. IS OBLIGATED TO REMOVE
THE OBSTACLES TO NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WHICH CONGRESS
IMPOSED. END SUMMARY.

2. BEGINNING WITH COMMENT THAT U.S. TRADE LEGISLATION
INCLUDES PROVISIONS UNACCPETABLE TO USSR, ALKHIMOV STATED
BOARD MEETING UNDERTAKEN AT THE SUGGESTION OF TRADE
AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL'S AMERICAN DIRECTORS, " DISTURBED
BY THE INFLUENCE WHICH RECENT TRADE LEGISLATION DIS-
CRIMINATORY TOWARD THE USSR MIGHT HAVE" ON BILATERAL
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TRADE. ALKHIMOV CLAIMED THAT THE U.S. LEGISLTATION

NOT ONLY FAILED TO FULFILL EARLIER OBLIGATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE 1972 TRADE AGREEMENT BUT THAT THE MEASURES SET BACK SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS IN GENERAL. ALKHIMOV EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUALS TAKING PART IN MEETINGS, MAKING POINTS THAT U.S. BUSINESSMEN HAD STRESSED VALUE OF U.S.-SOVIET TRADE AT TIME WHEN U.S. ECONOMY IS IN GREAT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY AND CITING SECRETARY DENT IN CHICAGO THAT TRADE RESTRICTIONS HURT THE U.S. ITSELF. HE CITED OTHER AMERICANS AS ASKING "IF THE USSR DID NOT INTEND TO CURTAIL PLACING ORDERS IN THE U.S.," AND ANSWERED THAT THE SOVIETS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE U.S. BUT OF COURSE WILL NOT GO SO FAR AS TO APPLY DISCRIMINATORY CONDITIONS (I.E., IN FAVOR OF U.S. FIRMS).

3. ALKHIMOV NOTED SOVIETS' IMPRESSION THAT PROCESS OF SERIOUS RE-EVALUATION IS TAKING PLACE IN U.S., THAT IT IS BECOMING CLEARER TO MANY AMERICANS THAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN ON PREMISE THAT BILATERAL TRADE REPRESENTS A KIND OF GIFT TO USSR WERE MISTAKEN. DESCRIBING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AS OCCUPIED IN SEEKING MEANS TO OVERCOME ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS TO TRADE BROUGHT ABOUT BY DISCRIMINATORY DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS, HE SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT BE CONTENT WITH COMMERCIAL CREDITS SINCE OTHER COUNTRIES ARE OFFERING BETTER TERMS. HE STATED THAT SOVIETS HAVE CONCLUDED NEITHER ADMINISTRATION NOR AMERICAN SOCIETY INTENDS TO ACCEPT CURRENT SITUATION, AND HE WENT ON TO CITE AMERICAN SOURCES WHO ALLEGEDLY "DEMAND" THAT CONGRESS RE-EXAMINE THE TRADE/FINANCE LEGISLATION THIS YEAR.

4. CLOSING INTERVIEW, ALKHIMOV ANNOUNCED THAT U.S.-USSR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION WILL MEET IN MOSCOW IN APRIL AND THAT NEXT MEETING OF JOINT TRADE COUNCIL BOARD WILL TAKE PLACE NEXT OCTOBER IN WASHINGTON. HE CONCLUDED WITH STATEMENTS THAT FORTHCOMING VISIT OF GENERAL SECRETARY L.I. BREZHNEV TO U.S. IS STIMULATING GREAT INTEREST THROUGHOUT THE U.S.

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5. ALKHIMOV'S STATEMENTS TEND TO CONFIRM THAT USSR IS STILL PUSHING REASONABLY POSITIVE LINE ON TRADE RELATIONS WITH U.S. BUT ALSO UNDERLINE CONTINUED SOVIET DISPLEASURE OVER THE TRADE LEGISLATION. HE IS CLEARLY PRODDING THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS TO WORK OUT ACCEPTABLE NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION, AND SOON.

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